

HAWKE'S BAY FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HAWKE'S BAY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

HELD AT THE GAME FARM ON TUESDAY 12th MARCH 2024

PRESENT:

Messrs: Bates (Chair), Lumsden, MacKay, Callum Slavin, Blair Slavin, Melville, Bowcock

IN ATTENDANCE:

Corina Jordan Regional Manager, Kerry Meehan Staff, Sam Robinson Governance Advisor

APOLOGIES

Niblett, Duley

WELCOME

Cr Bates welcomed everyone to the meeting. Noted meeting is being audio recorded for record keeping purposes

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5th December were true and correct record of the meeting.

Bowcock/Mckay

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Note that item 14 was not seconded but was agreed by Council. Update wording in finance report to payments report. Term deposits, Manager to investigate which accounts are restricted in there use before any consolidation and consult with NZC on strategy with reserve funds.

HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

That the Health & Safety report be accepted by Council. Contractor has been consulted regarding stair railing, staff to follow up.

C Slavin/B Slavin

CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

The conflict-of-interest register was signed by all Councillors present. Chairman Bates declared conflict with Rununga Weir.

NZC UPDATE

NZC are seeking regions to reduce budgets by 3% as licence fees will not be increasing this year. Manager to talk to 24/25 budget when meeting enters Public Excluded.

A last consultation on the Health & Safety policy will be coming through from NZC shortly.

Cncr C Slavin questioned the process after council has submitted feedback on other policies. NZC collated feedback from regions and NZC staff put together recommendations to got to NZC meeting and the council votes on that policy based on the feedback from the regions. To date policy has been going through and being passed by NZC but with amendments to reflect feedback that's been received by regions.

HUNTER PERCEPTION SURVEY

Dr Humphrey Walker provided some feedback on the recent hunter perception survey with some draft preliminary results. Survey ran for 20 days with 214 responses and 192 completing the survey, however 91 of the respondents had not hunted upland game and were looking for the incentive but the system weeded them out. Dr Walker presented some draft results across the questions that were asked in the

survey. Council discussed publicising this years game conditions well across media channels and provide hunters with more information on season conditions. A detailed report will be compiled for council for the next meeting. Chairman enquired weather there are more modern methods we could use to ascertain harvest numbers from hunters.

RUNUNGA WEIR UPDATE

Chairman Bates & Regional Manager met with HBRC, Between two rivers catchment group, Iwi and some of the land owners around and below the lake in regard to the Weir HBFGC have resource consent for on the Rununga Lake. The weir was installed 20 years ago to raise the lake level by 30cm. Residents below the weir are concerned about the risk of flooding in a weather event. Results from a LiDAR report is being awaited to make further assessments.

NZCEO & HBRC MANAGER UPDATE – Corina Jordan

NZC have had a couple of meeting with the new Minster of Hunting & Fishing Todd McClay who we now report to. He is looking at legislative changes for F&G in the first term. His priorities for us are to understand licence holders needs, no licence fee increases over the next couple of years and looking for F&G to make efficiencies. He has concerns for F&G resource management & advocacy functions, especially at a regional level. F&G also need to address financial resilience issues through the regions. He also made changes to the regulations for two regions bag limits for this years game bird season. There is an opportunity for our organisation to look at what our licence holders want, our core functions & extension programs.

RUATANIWHA DAM Council discussed the rumours of the Ruataniwha dam proposal being revived. Manager to investigate further and provide a paper to council to think about what the councils position will be if it were to happen. HBFGC was not opposed to the dam itself, rather the use of the water to irrigate for dairy farms and the resulting pollution going back into the aquifer with the nitrogen levels being lifting from 0.4-0.8 up to 3.6.

Corina has spent a bit of time over here now and is intending to spend more time to provide more hands on support so will increase from 1 day/week to a week every three weeks or couple of days every second week in the office as she knows the value of it.

LANDOWNER CONNECTIONS Work has been done to connect with local landowners with wetlands. Tony Jeffard runs a kids hunt, have recontacted him to see if that are happening this year and we will take media along to showcase that. Some articles are coming out in Farmers Weekly showcasing the wetland work that is being done in HB. There is also a feature with Gerald Wilson.

Going forward changes to agendas will include an NZCEO report, NZC Consultations, a Managers report for the region & a comms report.

SENIOR FIELD OFFICER APPOINTMENT No applications received when position was advertised over Christmas. Readvertised and three applications received, with one pulling out before interviews. Two interviews took place last week by Manager, NZC HR Manager & Digby Livingston, Chairman withdrew from interviews due to knowing two applicants but provided a brief on what the expectations of the council were including experienced person to undertake core F&G duties. Interviews had pre-formed questions and a score sheet against core competencies. Callum discussed concerns using Digby after past experiences with council. Reference checks are now taking place and Manager will feed back further information back to council once that process is completed.

10: 2023-24 OPERATIONAL WORKPLAN

The operational workplan has been brought back into line with previous versions. Manager would like to delete 1111 EDNA testing and instead do a holistic river analysis project. Species Management in budget of \$6800 but there may be a risk of going over budget with the extra costs in doing aerial surveys and paying other regions staff to do the work. The Game farm is also over budget, staff have made reductions to make savings. Davey is spending one day/week on field work which will reduce hours. Chairman is

investigating ways to put the game farm into a trust so that externally funding can be sought. Budget is showing \$66000 fund of restricted reserves for fresh water health or water quality. Manager is proposing to use the funds to do a research project on the health of the rivers and state of the fisheries in a more holistic way. Can be done by pooling HBRC & DOC data, spacial mapping data, drift dive and spawning survey results and further ecological analysis. Manager to design a brief to bring back to council.

Agreed

That the council accepts the 2023-24 Operational Work plan

B Slavin/Mackay

11: 2023/24 Audit Costs

Agreed

That council accepts the added cost of the 23-24 audit

Mackay/Bowcock

12 Council Priorities for 2024-25

Councillors put forward their priorities for what they would like for 24-25.

Cr Bowcock: Concerns for Quail & Pheasant numbers due to cat predation. Already work being done on other predators. Keep game farm education momentum growing.

Cr McKay: Garm farm functioning properly so staff can focus on core business. Continue building relationships with Iwi. Develop, in conjunction with our current responsibilities, new ways of doing trend counts, Eg use of aerial drones for game birds and drones for use in our rivers

Chairman Bates: Core roles and see game farm self-funding & building relationships.

Cr Lumsden: Core business & social licence, growing licence base with younger anglers. Improve fish numbers in the rivers once it's established the food chain is sufficient.

Cr Blair Slavin: Getting more youth hunters involved and increase female participation. Core business. Rangers more education focus not just prosecution. More good staff.

Cr Callum Slavin: Game farm, core activities and more publicity.

Cr Melville: Clearly defining operations & staff roles. Communication & publicity and promoting Fish & Game to the community.

Manager will pull all the information together and draft up a plan to bring back to council.

Cr Bowcock has a stand he is willing to provide to F&G to ballot out to a junior hunter near Horseshoe lake.

13: Anglers Notice Review

Chairman Bates would like to see our regulations simplify & follow Southlands and remove restrictions on bait fishing to encourage younger anglers and increase the likely hood of success with anglers catching fish. Increase limit back to 2 fish per day. Simplify regs to encourage new anglers. Survey licence holders, clubs & agents for feedback.

Agreed

That Council agrees to the consultation process and time frame for considering changes to the 2024/25 Anglers Notice.

Mackay/Melville

14: Swan Egg Harvest

Council agrees for staff to investigate trial costs.

Mackay/C Slavin

15: Fish Orders From Eastern

Staff to order 300 yearlings for next year.

18: Management Report

Report taken as read. Pukeko permits, staff follow up returns on expired permits. Staff to highlight Pukeko hunting this season with licence holders and growers. Lake Purimu, new field officer to visit and establish required work around willows, weir etc.

19: Finance Report

6.1 Council approves payments of \$140903.13 1st November to 31st January.

Bowcock/B Slavin

6.2 HBFGC direct staff to review costs of the game farm and provide updated estimates, revise budget & notify council for operation of the educational facility.

19.2 Licence Report

Council accepts the licence report.

Mackay/Melville

PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION

It was agreed that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting namely to discuss budgets for 2024-25.

Bowcock/Mackay

PUBLIC INCLUDED SESSION

The meeting moved back into Public included Session at 8.45pm

Meeting Closed

Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30pm

Chairman

Date